

San Francisco Estuary Institute



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MEMORANDUM

September 15, 1995

TO: Dick Daniel
FROM: Margaret Johnston
SUBJECT: September 14 Workshop materials: Problem Statements, Objectives, and Mission Statement

We have reviewed the problem statements and attendant objectives and find that our prior input via BDOC has been adequately reflected.

Ecosystem quality

We are quite pleased with the degree to which habitat is now playing a substantial role in the development of the Plan. The process being followed appears to be successfully achieving a consensus around the values and functions of habitat that are important. We are concerned that the technical basis upon which the next steps in coming up with a restoration plan--defining how much of what types of habitat is needed where, and what time table can be set forth for its restoration or creation--is inadequate. We believe that the Bay Area Wetlands Habitat Goals Project is a valuable model for bringing science and policy together in such a goal setting process. We will be sending you more information about this project under separate cover.

Water Quality

In the area of water quality, we urge you to keep the "may" statements in the Problem Statement. There is a substantial amount of evidence that pollutants may cause ecological problems, but very little direct evidence. This may make pollutant reduction a lower priority for immediate action. But to only include those problems where there is certainty on cause and effects would relieve CalFed of ensuring that uncertainties are addressed in the long run. We believe that monitoring and special studies developed to evaluate progress should be required to address such uncertainties, and in the long run develop the information needed to remove the uncertainty.

Mission Statement

Restoring Ecological Health. We would urge you to retain the language referring to "restoring ecological health". Restoration used here clearly means re-establishing the functions and values that have been identified in the planning process, not returning to some historic condition. We have and do advocate thorough analysis of historic conditions in the planning process. It helps us to understand what the system would tend to do if unfettered by human intervention, it also helps us understand the functions and values the system once provided. But the point of historical analysis is to help us move forward in a rational way, not to futile attempt to return to past conditions. A great deal of thinking about the concept of 'ecological health' is going on at the present time. We will be sending you additional materials on this topic under separate cover.

Comprehensiveness of Plan. Since the plan will not address activities to increase habitat or reduce pollution sources within the Bay, it cannot really be considered a comprehensive plan to restore the ecological health of the Bay-Delta system. A more accurate statement would be that you are developing a comprehensive plan to restore the ecological health of the Delta and in so doing enhance the ecological health of the Bay-Delta system. Such convoluted language would certainly, however, take the "punch" out of your mission statement, so I wouldn't really expect you to use it. I would like to see some acknowledgement of this point in text, however. In particular, it should be noted that the CalFed Plan, together with the management actions taking place in the Bay area, through the CCMP and other efforts, can result in a truly comprehensive approach.